United Nations S/2018/332

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 April 2018

Original: English

Identical letters dated 11 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to draw your attention to the extremely serious threats made by senior officials in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France to use military force against my country, Syria, under the pretext of the use of toxic chemical materials in "Duma".

As you are aware, the Syrian Government sent an official letter yesterday, 10 April 2018, to the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), requesting him to send a fact-finding mission team as soon as possible to the alleged location in "Duma" to investigate this alleged incident. In its letter, my Government emphasized its readiness to provide all necessary assistance to that mission, to guarantee the safety of its members and to facilitate interviews and the collection of samples, in accordance with the terms of reference of the OPCW.

The false accusations made by the Governments of these three Permanent Members of the Security Council against my country, Syria, prior to the fact-finding mission visit to Syria, prove that there is a deliberate intention and a prior decision by those Governments to launch a military aggression against the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is required today, under Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, to exercise his powers to alert the Security Council to the seriousness of such threats and that such possible military aggression will threaten international peace and security. The Security Council is also required today to exercise its mandates under Article 1, paragraph 1, and Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter, in maintaining international peace and security, the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace and in ensuring that all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-05828 (E) 130418

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Letter dated 11 April 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the deliberations that took place in the Security Council on 10 April 2018 regarding the ongoing allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In that regard, I write to express my deep disappointment that the Security Council was unable to agree upon a dedicated mechanism to attribute responsibility for the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

I reiterate my outrage at reports of the use of such weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also reiterate my strong condemnation of the use of chemical weapons. Any confirmed use of chemical weapons, by any party to the conflict, is abhorrent, reprehensible and a clear violation of international law.

The seriousness of the most recent allegations regarding the use of chemical weapons in Duma (Eastern Ghutah) clearly warrants an impartial, objective and independent investigation, using professional expertise. I therefore reaffirm my support for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and its fact-finding mission, which is tasked with establishing the facts surrounding allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

OPCW has already received and responded positively to a request to deploy a team of the fact-finding mission. Accordingly, preparations, including security support provided by the United Nations, are well under way for the arrival of the team in the Syrian Arab Republic. The fact-finding mission must be granted full access, without restrictions or impediments, in order that it may carry out its activities.

Ensuring accountability for a confirmed use of chemical weapons is our responsibility, not least to the victims of such attacks. A lack of accountability emboldens those who would use such weapons by providing them with the reassurance of impunity. This, in turn, further weakens the norm proscribing the use of chemical weapons and the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture as a whole.

I urge all Member States to act responsibly in these dangerous circumstances. I appeal to the Security Council to fulfil its duties and not to give up on efforts to agree upon a dedicated, impartial, objective and independent mechanism for attributing responsibility with regard to the use of chemical weapons. I stand ready to support such efforts.

I should be grateful if you could bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

18-05823 (E) 130418

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